



Travellers - Ten things no one will tell you about travelling

Travelling is one of the best things you'll ever do in life, it's a unique experience. Travelling will teach you how to be free in the broadest sense of the word, and is the best investment you'll ever make in life experiences.

Travelling is indeed one of the best things one can do, but it is not always as great as everyone envisages. Hence, here we bring you a selection of 10 things no one will tell you about travelling:

1. Sometimes what appears to be the straightest route, may not always be the quickest, particularly when using public transport.

You look at your map, mark spots A and B, check the distance between them, calculate the average and estimate that your journey will say take approximately two hours. We regret to tell you that, when you are travelling via public transport, this is not always how it goes. So be sure to check routes and timetables beforehand.

This is one of the things that no one will tell you about travelling, long hours in uncomfortable buses, sleepless nights in trains because your bunk buddy can't stop snoring, unbearable hours stuck in traffic during rush hour, inside a tuk-tuk, feeling how pollution penetrates every inch of your body.

However, there is something we can't deny, and that is when you are travelling, it doesn't affect you as much, and a lot of the time, despite the long hours, these journeys can offer us incredible insights and experiences.

2. Long waiting hours at airports, bus and train stations

Everyone wants to be you when you are going away on a trip, even when you admit that you have to take a 13-hour flight and have a layover with eight hours to kill at an airport. Despite that, they keep thinking you are the luckiest person alive.

And you are in a way, but who can say they enjoy having to sit in a chair for eight hours straight trying to take a nap before catching a connecting flight?

The airport in Dubai, for instance, a usual stop-over in relation to flights to Asia, is amazing. They even have reclining seats that look like beds, but see if you are lucky enough to get one.

Naturally, they will be taken when you get there and no one will leave you theirs, no matter how hard you try to pull your sad face. Instead, you will probably have to spend your spare eight hours between a regular chair and the countless shops in the airport, where you will be able to find pretty much anything you are looking for. Needless to say, at prohibitive prices.

3. Food is not always delicious or gentle on your stomach

Food is one of the reasons why a lot of people travel the world. Trying exotic dishes, new flavours or impossible textures becomes part of the trip, although it is not always as good as it seems. Travellers are on a tight budget most of the time, so they can't go around sitting in nice restaurants eating high on the hog.

Sometimes, that has its drawbacks. The biggest issue is called Traveller's Diarrhoea. This illness gets into your system, it doesn't give you a break for as long as it lasts. Meanwhile, you curse yourself for craving that greasy samosa from the street food stand.

Another thing is that you might want to try some unusual local dish, such as a hot bean dish in Ecuador, and end up with a guinea pig on your plate. In this particular case, we have to admit that it was delicious but, while you're at it, you cannot stop thinking about the way the guinea pig might have looked before putting it on the frying pan.

4. The language gap (in some occasions)

Speaking the language should be one of our travel essentials. Without it, we would be lost most of the times. Be it through gestures or smiles, communication is a must.

Most of the times we won't know the local language, but since they say you can go anywhere if you speak English, maybe we should not be worried. Unfortunately, we have to say this is not always true. You should know that in a lot of countries, especially the further away you get from the tourists hotspots, gesturing and smiling are more powerful than English, although it is also true that sometimes (although more rarely) these are also useless.

It is not unusual to hopelessly give up trying to communicate with locals at a train station or to ask someone we just bumped into whether we are going in the right direction, get an affirmative answer and realise half an hour later that we are going the opposite way we were supposed to, although not all are bad experiences. Google Translate is a good app. As long as you have GSM coverage.

5. You won't like everywhere you go

When we depart on a trip, we put our soul and heart into it.

Sometimes we'll lose heart because not all places will look as idyllic or exotic as in travel guides or the pictures from the catalogues they have at travel agencies. Sometimes, places can be so packed with people and will look so chaotic to you that you will find them completely dispensable.

On other occasions, the water from that idyllic beach will lose the turquoise colour it had on the travel guide and will look a lot more mundane. It might even happen that the monument you were so eager to see will be surrounded by scaffoldings (something quite common when travelling around Europe, where building works are the order of day).

6. Changing accommodation on a daily basis is exhausting sometimes

This is another one of those things no one tells you about when talking about how wonderful it is to travel. Travelling means moving, and when you move you change places, which also implies changing accommodation.

Doing that when you are carrying a 15-kilo backpack over your shoulders and you are on budget is not as easy as it seems. Not to mention the sentiment of wanting to find a place that feels like home in the midst of so many changes.

Although it is true that visiting new places and meeting new people is exhilarating, sometimes our body, but especially our mind, needs to rest in the same place for a few days and wake up knowing where we are.

7. Not everyone is good, even if you want to believe so

As a rule of thumb, people who are used to travelling, and moving around, are more open-minded with regards to the people surrounding them.

This is something good, but we cannot relax either because, unfortunately, not everyone may be as good as they seem, even if this is hard to admit.

There are countries you can travel to with no fear of being mugged, scammed or similar, and others where you will have to pay special attention because picaresque is ingrained in their culture. It is not our intention to be dramatic here, but it is something you should be aware of and not leave to fate or luck, otherwise you may regret not having been forward thinking.

This, in certain countries, forces you to be constantly on the alert, which is something that, at the end of the day, represents some added stress on your trip.

8. There will always be some place left to visit

When we travel, especially if we do it for a limited period of time, a lot of us try to fit so much into our schedules that there are days when we don't even have time to breathe. In the end, you come back so tired that you need to go on vacation again to recharge your batteries.

Planning the trip and realising you can't possibly fit in all you want to do can be exhausting and, sometimes, frustrating.

Although here, we have to add that it is a good strategy to leave something out so that you have an excuse to return.

9. Not all beaches are idyllic nor all destinations exotic

How many times have you heard the phrase "that looks like such an exotic country".

Whenever you decide to travel far away? Whatever the country, it seems like the further it is, the more exotic it has to be.

This is not always true. Take India, for instance. A lot of the times, India is regarded as an exotic destination. Maybe this is the result of some of the pictures of luxury resorts and temples we see in travel agencies. We hate to say it but, if you are travelling on your own, setting luxury aside, this is not what you will find. India can be a lot of things, but there is no doubt that exotic cannot be used in the literal sense of the word.

10. All that glitters is not gold

A lot of people, when they find out how often we travel, believe we are very fortunate. Of course we are, but most of the time they are not aware, or do not realise that there is a lot of work behind a trip if we want to plan it well.

It is true that for us the trip starts the moment we start thinking about it, but so does the work.

Purchasing plane tickets, booking accommodations, exchanging your travel money into the local currency, planning itineraries, reading about the destination, working your way around the internet while you try to look for information about a little known destination..... all this requires long hours of research and planning and dedication. All that glitters is not gold.

However, if you do enjoy travelling, all these little details no one tells you about, end up just being content for stories to tell your friends.